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Editorial

IT is well that we should ask one another from time to time: What have you been reading lately? To do so not only shows a wholesome interest in the workings of another mind, but may have the happy effect of calling one's attention to a book or books that one has overlooked or not even heard of. If asked the question at this moment, we should speak with enthusiasm of Prof. W. E. Hocking's *The Coming World Civilization* (Allen and Unwin, 16s.). Its title is not particularly inviting. The book is far from being a utopian blue-print. Its starting-point is indicated thus: "The era of 'the civilizations' being past, what we now enter is either the era of civilization or the era of universal desolation. I shall write as though only the former alternative were before us; but I shall be writing of the conditions under which alone that alternative can be realized." Prof. Hocking belongs, as it were, to the generation of men like A. N. Whitehead and Baron von Hügel. He is in their class. He has their largeness of outlook and depth of understanding. But, while some of the categories of his thought may be unfamiliar, there is a rare beauty in his style of writing.

He says much that is memorable about the fundamental relations of State and Church, about science and faith, about the unique claims of Christianity and a positive valuation of the religions of the world, and about what the West has to learn from the Orient. Again and again, he shows how old themes must be seen in a new perspective, and he lifts us out of the insularity and provincialism that beset those who are preoccupied with civil or ecclesiastical politics or with theological details. To any who feel the need of a mind-stretching book, this is to be recommended. Prof. Hocking is no brash cosmopolitan. Take this: "Just because civilization is becoming one and world-wise, the localisms which preserve the world from monotony, and conserve those precious semi-solitudes in which alone thought and fine art and every creative impulse flourish, must be the more vigorously protected and prized."

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We have been asked to revive the custom of giving a list each December of books that have been reviewed in THEOLOGY during the past year, which readers may like to consider when giving Christmas presents or when deciding how to use book tokens. Here is a list for 1958 with a reference to the number in which a review will be found:

From Bossuet to Newman. By Owen Chadwick. Cambridge University Press, 25s. (February, p. 75.)

The Wrath of the Lamb. By A. T. Hanson. S.P.C.K., 25s. (March, p. 119.)

The Acts of the Apostles. By C. S. C. Williams. A. and C. Black, 25s. (March, p. 121.)
Church and People in an Industrial City. By E. R. Wickham. Lutterworth Press, 30s. (May, p. 184.)
The Family in Contemporary Society. S.P.C.K., 10s. 6d. (June, p. 221.)
Jesus and His Coming. By J. A. T. Robinson. S.C.M. Press, 15s. (June, p. 256.)
Christianity and Paradox: critical studies in twentieth-century theology. By R. W. Hepburn. Watts, 18s. (July, p. 266.)
Communism and the Theologians. By Charles West. S.C.M. Press, 35s. (September, p. 382.)
An Experimental Liturgy. Lutterworth Press, 7s. 6d. (October, p. 398.)
The Recovery of Unity. By E. L. Mascall. Longmans, 25s. (October, p. 421.)

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The circulation of THEOLOGY has continued to increase. For this we must be indebted to those readers who commend it to their friends. We continue to receive many more letters than we are able to publish: we are grateful for them all and take this opportunity of thanking our correspondents. We propose more or less regularly to attach to our editorials a feature like the following, unless we receive too many protests against its frivolity! The pages of THEOLOGY necessarily contain so much that is solemn that a light morsel may not be taken amiss.

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Autres temps autres mœurs. "It was the intention of several of the inhabitants of the parish of St Saviour, Southwark, to give a performance of Sacred Music in the church for the benefit of the Parochial and National Schools. . . . Large posting bills were prepared and published. We are happy, however, to say that the intention having reached the ears of the Lord Bishop of Winchester, his lordship wrote to the Rev. William Curling, commanding that no such performance should take place. We trust these abominations will be as resolutely put down elsewhere."—*The Christian Remembrancer,* January 1843, p. 195.

The Teaching of Theology for the Ministry

FOR some time now those with their ear to the ground have been aware of rumblings in the basement in regard to the theological training of ordinands presaging a revolution considerably more radical than any adjustment of our existing set-up or one more tinkering with G.O.E.[1] Nor have these movements been confined entirely to the

[1] Cf. most recently, G. Neville, "Training for a Prophetic Ministry", THEOLOGY, August 1958, pp. 324-7.

basement. Last year's Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has thrown off some observations that can hardly be described as moderating;[1] and an English diocesan has already made a breach in the wall through which a dangerous trickle of water may soon begin to flow. But a new situation has now been created by a similar plea from the man perhaps who can speak with more authority than anyone else in the Church of England about the selection and recruitment of men for the ministry. The Bishop of Southwell's latest book[2] contains a chapter on theological training, in the course of which he indicates the need for "some pretty decisive revision of policy". Whether what he proposes is radical enough is a matter of opinion; but he has brought out into the open for discussion at the highest level a number of issues that should urgently be engaging the thinking of the Church.

Few surely will doubt that Dr Barry is right in insisting that the spearhead of the Church's mission must, now more than ever, be an ordained ministry that really "knows its stuff". He is quite clear that this does not mean excluding good men who lack the chance or the capacity for academic training: indeed, he makes the most sustained case yet heard from high authority for ordaining to an unpaid ministry considerable numbers of men in all walks of secular life. But in a situation where, for the foreseeable future, the number of full-time clergy is bound to decline steadily, it becomes the more imperative to see that those whom we do ordain compensate in quality for what we shall lack in quantity. His case against plugging the gap with inferior material is unanswerable. As Daniel Jenkins has said, "If history proves anything, it is that bad clergy are worse than no clergy".[3] And I would agree with both of them that our immediate danger is of admitting for training too many rather than too few. At any rate, from my experience of marking G.O.E., there are men at the bottom of the scale upon whom it is frankly a waste of money and manpower to expend our present system of training. This is not, of course, necessarily the same thing as saying they should not be ordained.

But it is with the solid core of the professional ministry that this article, like the bishop's book, is concerned. For their theological training he makes the strongest plea of "back to the universities". The Church, he says, has no right to press for theological faculties, particularly in the provincial universities, if it is not going to make more use of them than it does at present. It is absurd that the country should be dotted with small colleges, inadequately staffed with semi-trained and underpaid men, however devoted, to give teaching in academic theology which could much better be given at university centres. To my mind, as I shall indicate, there is a very definite limit to what in the way of theological training *for the ministry* can and should be expected within the scope and syllabus of a university.

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[1] G. F. Macleod, *Only One Way Left*, pp. 95 f.
[2] F. R. Barry, *Vocation and Ministry* (Nisbet, 1958).
[3] "Theology and the Ministry", THEOLOGY, March 1958, p. 103.

Nevertheless, I believe that the report of the Archbishops' Commission at the end of the war[1] was right in pressing for the theological colleges to be grouped as far as possible round university centres, and that the flouting of this recommendation has been deplorable.

Moreover, far too many ordinands are still being advised not to read theology at the university. There are, of course, those who should not do so. As Dr Barry says, "A man with ability to take high honours in Greats or history or natural science should probably be encouraged to do this first. He can then proceed to theology as a post-graduate subject for study. . . . But it seems to me that for the average student, who might get a third in English literature or an *aegrotat* in estate management, an initiation into theology can provide a more liberal education and is likely to awaken the mind better than a cursory knowledge in some other department".[2] But the idea is still very potent, especially among the older generation of clergy and schoolmasters who have little first-hand experience of contemporary theology, that theology is a narrowing discipline and that the prison gates should not be allowed to close upon the ordinand till he has been able to "broaden his mind" in some other subject. This is not advice one would expect to hear given to a prospective doctor, even though the medical student's curriculum is, in my experience, more inhibiting than almost any other to deep or wide thinking. C.A.C.T.M. consistently say that their policy is to encourage ordinands to read theology, and they have recently given earnest of this by a written recommendation to this effect to their selectors. But in practice one finds candidates having been given very different advice by the men they actually met on their boards, and even more in their schools and home parishes. In any case, the fact remains that in seven years' teaching at Cambridge I have supervised *one* first-year Honours man in theology.

But this is not where my real concern at this point lies, and in any case a large number of our best ordinands at Cambridge become such only in their second or third years. My chief concern is precisely with those "with the ability to take high honours in Greats or history or natural sciences". There are, in all conscience, few enough of them presenting themselves for the Church's ministry, and this should make us the more jealous to see that we train and use them aright. But what happens? Time and again one watches such men thrown away as potential leaders of the Church's thinking. After showing their ability in other fields, they are hustled through to ordination after a general examination in theology so designed as not to be beyond the capacity of any pass-level man (or even non-graduate) under forty. Or they may do a year's theology at the end of their time at college. But no policy exists to see that such men, the firsts and good seconds, the future teachers of the Church at every level, *are not allowed* to leave the university until they have at least put themselves on the way to being as adequately equipped in theology

[1] *Training for the Ministry*, Press and Publications Board, 1944.
[2] Op. cit., p. 129.

as in law or science or whatever else they were preparing for. This means, for those who have not read theology from the start, at least a fourth year and possibly more.[1] Whether a man undertakes this depends at the moment entirely on his own initiative and resources. But it should be the Church's responsibility to see that he does, and to provide him with the means. In fact, the Church would need to spend very little: it could even save money laid out for the same man's training at one of its own colleges. For as long as an intelligent man remains at a university he can almost always find grants for continuing his studies:[2] once he leaves he is likely to be dependent upon private sources. But even if it cost the Church several thousands a year, it would be money better spent than much which is at present invested in training men at the other end of the scale. For, as Dr Barry says, "the heaviest charge on Church funds is made for training men with the weakest qualifications. It is hard to believe that this really makes sense."[3] It is, however, somewhat ironical that his only specific proposal for saving money should be at the expense of those who are graduates in theology! He argues that they could have a year off their training. I would think that often they are precisely the people to have a year more—though not, I would agree, sitting in a theological college doing G.O.E.

The consequence of this failure to train theologians is seen in the chronic shortage of men qualified for teaching posts in our theological and training colleges, school and university chaplaincies, both at home and overseas, quite apart from the supply of men for university teaching and for training schemes in the dioceses and parishes. (This last need will become even more clamant if the Church really begins to prepare laymen seriously for their apostolate, and some of them for ordination.) The unedifying scramble for staff among theological college principals and the scraping of the barrel involved is a direct result of a short-sighted policy, for which indeed they must bear some share of the blame.[4] As I write this, I am in correspondence with a principal about a man for his staff whose sole record in academic theology is a poor second after one year.[5] Potentially he is

[1] It is hardly to the Church's credit that at Cambridge the Divinity Faculty is the only one in which there are actually fewer research students than before the war.

[2] Cf. A. Richardson, "Theology in the Modern Universities", THEOLOGY, March 1958, p. 98: "Church people generally do not yet seem to have realized that the State (through well-known mechanisms which need not here be described) is generously willing to provide the basic theological education of ordinands at no cost whatever to the Church or to the ordinands."

[3] Op. cit., p. 106.

[4] An undergraduate of my college recently came out of the Forces with a string of firsts in the Natural Sciences Tripos behind him. He had been accepted by a principal for immediate entry to a theological college, and one more potential teacher is now ordained with no more qualifications in theology than G.O.E.

[5] It is astonishing, indeed, to discover how many resident posts in our theological colleges are filled by men who read no theology at all apart from G.O.E. One well-known college recently had no one on the staff with a theological degree apart from the principal.

an excellent teacher (he got a good class previously in another subject), but it is unfair on him (and his pupils) that such a man should be pressed into service by the Church for work for which it has never trained him. Neither the Methodists nor the Romans (let alone the Presbyterians) would contemplate such a thing, nor would our Episcopal brethren in the United States.

The first step is surely that some sort of register—very flexible and always open to addition and revision—should be kept of men whose C.A.C.T.M. interview and subsequent record marks them out for this kind of service to the Church. A check could then be kept on their development to see that they received the proper theological training and later that their whereabouts and movements were available to those who needed to know.[1] Much fruitless correspondence could thus be saved and one would hope that the pool would not be as shallow as it is now.

I hope I have indicated that I believe the universities to have a vital part to play in the theological education of the ministry. It is upon them that the Church must primarily rely for its academic training in theology, especially in the case of those likely to have a share in its teaching ministry. But I now want to underline, more strongly than the Bishop of Southwell does, what I believe to be the inevitable limitations of their contribution. Dr Barry suggests more than once that if a man takes his degree in theology then all he needs is "a year to sit back and think, to learn to say his prayers, and to be given such training in 'pastoralia' as can be given prior to ordination".[2] I believe this represents a serious over-estimate of what the university can properly provide.

I am well aware that there are considerable differences between the universities at this point. At London the courses both for the B.D. and A.K.C. cover the whole, or almost the whole, of the G.O.E. syllabus and have for many years excused the ordinand from further examination, as the bishop desiderates. At some of the modern universities, too, wider syllabi of a less technical character are being devised.[3] But I will confine my remarks to Cambridge, which I know. Here it is of the essence of an Honours course that it shall *not* be vocational, or geared to the ends of some particular occupation or profession. Even medical students take the regular Natural Sciences Tripos and all clinical work is strictly separated from the B.A. course. The same applies in law and psychology. This, especially in the light of what has happened in many American State universities, I believe to be a principle of quite prime importance.

Hence I would not agree with Dr Barry when he says that the job of university theological faculties is "to teach 'theological students' theology",[4] if by that he means, as the inverted commas suggest,

[1] I recently received from an American Church just such a questionary about the progress of a former pupil. It was also a salutary example of bureaucracy run riot!

[2] Op. cit., p. 129.

[3] Some of what follows would need to be modified if the stimulating pattern described by Alan Richardson in the article already quoted came to prevail.

[4] Op. cit., p. 127.

ordinands. I believe the job of theological faculties is to teach theology. Naturally, any sensitive teaching will take into account the interests from which most of the pupils have been drawn to the subject. But it is most important that theology should be able to be read by anyone, whether he is an ordinand or not, whether he is a Christian or not, as an academic discipline, exactly as he might read history or modern languages. It is only, I believe, on such terms that those teaching theology can claim the respect of their colleagues and the right to be doing it in a university—and, in these days, the right to substantial Government money for the purpose. This does not mean, as is constantly assumed, that it cannot therefore be taught "from faith". If that were so, I for one should not be engaged in it; and in practice I find little or no tension at this point. But it does, I think, mean that it cannot be taught "to faith", either in the sense of presupposing faith or in the sense that its primary object is to promote faith. The primary object of theological teaching, as of all other teaching, in a university is to pursue truth. No Christian can regard these two aims as antithetical; but they are not immediately to be identified.

It follows therefore that there should be a difference—and even a healthy tension—between the teaching of theology in a university and the teaching of theology in a training college for the ministry. This will show itself in a number of ways; for instance, in matters of syllabus. The purpose of the Theological Tripos at Cambridge is to train men—and women—to think as theologians, just as the purpose of the History and Natural Sciences Triposes is to train them to think historically and scientifically. It concentrates primarily on giving them the tools and training them in their use. Unlike most other disciplines, which have years of school teaching behind them, it has a very limited period in which to do this, and it confines itself, probably wisely, to the basic linguistic disciplines, the biblical documents, and to selected, though widely selected, periods of Church history.[1] This means that doctrine (apart from some history of doctrine), which rightly forms the core of the ordinand's training, is almost wholly neglected in the degree course, as is ethics. Naturally,

[1] At the moment at any rate (and nothing else is practical politics) the Cambridge Tripos is thus heavily weighted on the side of producing technical theologians. The need for this will remain, but it is very healthy that some modern universities are pioneering in wider fields. The Certificate in Christian Theology at Cambridge has a much broader syllabus than the Tripos and is in many ways a better course for the non-academic ordinand; but it leads only to an Ordinary Degree, and many colleges are now rightly loth in the face of fierce competition to accept men not reading for Honours.

On a matter of syllabus, a misstatement in Dr Barry's book should be corrected. He writes: "Cambridge has now established a new tripos combining 'arts' and 'science' subjects together. Could there now be an extension of that project so as to make it possible for a man to offer biblical and theological subjects on the 'arts' side for such a combined tripos?" (op. cit., p. 115). But (*a*) the tripos he has in mind has not been established but only proposed (and fairly heavily criticized), and (*b*) what it proposes is a Part II in the Principles of Science for those who have already taken Part I of an existing arts tripos. It could, of course, be taken after Part I Theology.

this is not entirely a question of syllabus. Questions of denominational interpretation enter in, and even more the fact that doctrine, if it is to be a living thing and not merely confined to history, demands to be taught "existentially".

This last phrase covers two things. It includes the requirement already referred to, that it be taught "to faith" and not merely "from faith". To use another piece of contemporary theological jargon, doctrinal concern is part of the Church's *kerygmatic* task, explicating its message in terms of the ever-changing environment in which it must be proclaimed. It is not merely part of the pursuit of truth for its own sake, but the pursuit of truth with a very definite end in view. Any living and relevant proclamation of the Gospel must demand of its ministers the most strenuous application to this task. But it is not one that is best undertaken within the confines of a university discipline.

The second implication of doctrinal theology being essentially an existential pursuit is that it must be related as closely as possible to the real-life situation with which it is concerned. Dr Barry is surely right when he says of the ordinand, "What matters most is a mind trained to theological thinking, bringing Christian insight to bear on the facts of the human situation and discerning how the living God is at work in them. . . . If so, perhaps we should be prepared to sacrifice some technically theological knowledge for more knowledge about the world itself and particularly about the currents of life and thought in contemporary society, approached from a theological point of view".[1] But if so, where such knowledge is to be gained (other than in a purely theoretical way) is surely not in the university, nor even within the walls of a theological college, but in "the world itself".

It is at this point that I believe we are being summoned to a change in our system of training a good deal more radical than the bishop appears to contemplate.

Some seven years ago I blew off in an article which appeared in THEOLOGY for June 1952 under the title, "The Theological College in a Changing World". In the course of it I said: "Much of the work of the theological colleges in the future must be done outside their own walls." By this I meant that though men might receive their initial training in theological method, in biblical and historical study, within the walls of a theological college as at present constituted, and should certainly return to its fellowship before ordination, much of what corresponded in management training courses to "experience in production departments" could really only be learnt in the field.[2] I had in mind that during their theological college training men should spend stretches of time in groups working both

[1] Op. cit., p. 118.

[2] Recognition of this is indeed implied in the bishop's remark that "if the practical difficulties were not so great" much of a man's "training could best be done after his ordination" (op. cit., p. 130). No one wishes to decry any post-ordination study, but in the present situation in the parishes it is, I believe, a hopelessly broken reed on which to rely.

in parishes and in secular jobs, and that their studies of doctrine, ethics, worship and the like should be allowed to develop directly out of these real-life situations and the questions they threw up, under the qualified guidance of men who were theologically involved in them.

As I write, a pilot scheme of this kind is actually about to begin. From one side, it springs directly from the concern of a group of Cambridge deans and chaplains for a type of theological training which they believed to be essential but which they knew to be impossible within the confines of a university or even of an ordinary theological college. The Bishop of Sheffield has appointed one of our number, the Rev. R. C. Walls, to a canonry at Sheffield primarily to start such a scheme there, in conjunction with the Cambridge theological colleges. It is too early to say anything further about it, but I believe it to be potentially one of the most exciting and important developments in the Church of England to-day.[1]

Ultimately, I believe this must lead to a new sort of theological college, in the first instance alongside those of the more traditional pattern. Dr Macleod in the book already mentioned[2] sketches such an additional development for the Church of Scotland: "Among its necessities might be—living together in community with chores as part of the pattern, a first year covering the main aspects of the present four disciplines: a long summer spent as labourers in heavy industry without classes: a winter spent in community in a large city parish with complete involvement in its activities, its visiting, its youth clubs, with but one lecture a day: a final year in withdrawal from parish and industry with a major concern for theology, for the devotional life, and for pastoral training, in light of that experience."

But the pattern from which we are likely to perhaps learn most is that now adopted in several Roman Catholic seminaries on the Continent, in which the "earthing" of theology has probably gone further than anywhere in this country. There are two aspects of these, perhaps of secondary importance, on which I should like to comment in closing. The first is the size of such a seminary—about 100 students and 10 staff. To the significance of this I shall return. But before the English reader, accustomed to our numbers of about 40, dismisses a theological college of such dimensions as an absurdity, I would cite the second and complementary fact. The students are divided into teams of four or five, living together in close quarters. This is one of the fundamental principles of the training and is designed to build up fellowship in work, prayer, thinking and charity. Later, in the parishes they will be working in teams, and this will bear the more fruit with the experience of the seminary behind them. Teams

[1] Schemes for ordinands working in industry have, of course, been in successful operation for some time, notably under Canon E. R. Wickham of the Sheffield Industrial Mission and Penry Jones, Industrial Secretary of the Iona Community. Cf. also the work of William Temple College and D. A. Wood, "St George's Training Scheme for Christian Ministry", THEOLOGY, July 1958, pp. 283-7.

[2] *Only One Way Left*, p. 96.

meet to plan their activities, to study the Bible, to discuss, meditate, intercede, and even to be examined together. They are responsible as such for leading prayers in chapel, for initiating general discussions, for manual work during the week and for pastoral work on Sundays. This experience of what might be called the house church in the college is, I believe, important in a situation where group ministries are likely more and more to be required to tackle the problems of the Church, whether between clergy and clergy or even more between clergy and laity.

But to return to the question of size. Such numbers will cause astonishment only to those used to the English tradition. In the United States they are normal, and indeed are frequently exceeded. My first reaction to finding this was to deplore the disadvantages, which indeed are evident. But many of these reflect features in the American system of higher education which we are not obliged to imitate. Within limits, I believe, the size of a theological college is not decisive, provided the staff-student ratio is maintained and provided the principal is not the only senior man on the staff, to whom all must be able to turn at any moment.

But the advantages of having, in at least one instance (and no one would be obliged to go there!), a single centre of training in place of three of our isolated colleges, should be pondered very seriously. At the lowest level, the economic saving on overheads would be considerable. Our present system is extraordinarily extravagant, and costs are kept where they are mainly at the expense of salaries. As the Bishop of Southwell says: "It must . . . be quite frankly recognized that a college of thirty-five or forty students cannot be run as an economic unit. (The University Grants Committee will not, as a rule, support any institution of less than eighty for this reason.)"[1] And, while on the subject of economics, it should be pointed out that the more the teaching of theology is linked, on the one hand, with the universities and, on the other, with schemes by which in a new and deeper sense men "work their way through college", the less the Church is directly responsible for footing the bill. It would be entirely wrong to commend such reforms for their financial attractiveness; but to the obvious question, "How much more is this all going to cost?" the answer is, I believe, "*In the long run,* nothing".

But the real argument, as I see it, for larger colleges is that they can overcome the amateurism and isolation that inevitably attaches to teaching in small colleges remote from university centres. With the best will in the world, the member of an English theological college staff (*experto crede*) has to be a jack of all trades and in consequence a master of none. (How many *books*, for instance, have come out of the English theological colleges since the war? The contrast with the American scene is very noticeable.) With a staff of 10 or 12, however, it is possible to have two men in each of the major fields, with a much more creative theological interaction both among the students and within the faculty itself. It would then also be pos-

[1] Op. cit., p. 132.

sible, as in America, to create posts of sufficient seniority and scope to draw men to them from university teaching. At present in the Church of England (though not so completely in the Free Churches) the traffic between theological college staffs and university faculties is entirely one way. This operates to the detriment of the Church, and, I believe, to university faculties, which suffer because the transition between the academic and the more existential teaching of theology is not more easily made.

Let me end with one example. The teaching of Christian ethics in this country is almost non-existent. There is, I understand, one lectureship in England (at present held by Canon Ronald Preston at Manchester) that is specifically given over to this subject.[1] It is indeed taught in the theological colleges. But who, of any academic standing, would launch out in order to teach for the morals paper of G.O.E.[2] (with usually about two other subjects thrown in)? The contrast again with the United States is glaring (almost all our books on Christian ethics are now written by Americans). But the real seriousness of the situation is measured by the fact that it is on questions of social and personal ethics that the Church, from archbishops down through the local clergy to men on the shop floor, is constantly being presented with its greatest challenge and opportunity. Men are no longer interested in doctrinal issues, if they ever were. But on points of morals they still expect the Church to speak and to have something to say; and, on such issues, when a prophetic voice is raised they listen. (There has probably not been a bigger meeting in Cambridge this century than that which turned out to hear Father Huddleston on his return from South Africa.) I believe that we must learn to present more and more of our doctrinal teaching, especially about God, man and history, *through the issues of social ethics*—which is not, after all, so very different from what the eighth-century prophets were saying. But what in our present teaching of theology is equipping the clergy to do that? (It is not surprising that they have been left off recent Royal Commissions for which their training should have marked them out.) But first we must devise the structure which will compel some of the best minds in the Church to engage at this point. Nowhere is the need more urgent of such organs within the Church's life for planned and continuous thinking for which Canon E. R. Wickham has pleaded.[3]

J. A. T. Robinson.

Epiphany—Wise Men or Charlatans?

In a previous article, we called attention to the concentration of the occidental understanding of the Manifestation of the Lord on the

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[1] The chair of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford may of course be devoted to this. There is also now a similar one at Lampeter.

[2] I have learned, since writing this, that this paper has now been dropped from the examination!

[3] *Church and People in an Industrial City*, pp. 257–61

Magi-visit. It remains now to inquire, not only whether the tradition is worthy of perpetuation, but whether indeed the Magi were as "respectable" as Christian tradition has made them.

At the very outset we have to call attention to a very neglected—and undeservedly neglected—work of Dr Lowther Clarke. That distinguished scholar published in 1936 his *Divine Humanity*, and a reading of it at this stage but increases one's sadness that it is so seldom referred to, while for all the influence that it has had on our topic it might never have been penned. (Do preachers ever read?) "Justice", says Dr Lowther Clarke, referring to Matthew 2, "is not done to the wonderful richness of this chapter unless the interpretation is governed throughout by the key-word Magi, which . . . can only mean 'magicians'."[1] If it be objected that this immediately puts a new complexion on the narrative, then the author is quite aware of this: "The grave beauty of the story inclines us to adopt the favourable sense, and to see the Gentile religion at its best bowed before the feet of Christ." But not only is the word μάγος never used in the New Testament in a favourable sense at all, but in the post-apostolic period, as Dr Lowther Clarke pointed out, there are very numerous injunctions not to indulge in magic, and indeed there is one quite bald injunction: "Do not be a Magos." In Hermas, the "magos' is equated with the false prophet. If, in short, we are to suppose that Matthew intended us to read "wise men" as a translation for μάγος then it has to be supposed likewise that both Elymas (Acts 13) and Simon the Magos (Acts 7) were very badly used by the apostles. Such are the perils—and the vagaries—of translation, that by the time the New Testament came to be done into English the tradition had taken too firm a hold for the translation of μάγος in Matthew 2 to be anything but favourable to the travellers to Bethlehem. There is more than ample evidence that the early commentators were fully alive to the dark implications of the word Magos. So far from being "kings of Orient" or "wise men" they were dabblers in the black arts. Justin, for all his typology, returns to the evangelist's meaning with: "The Magi, having been carried off as booty for all manner of evil deeds, which were done in them by that demon, by coming and adoring Christ are shown to have gone away from that power which had taken them captive."[2] But the decisive commentary on the Magi comes from Ignatius of Antioch, if indeed it was meant to be such a commentary—and it is very hard to suppose that it was anything else: "A star shone in the heavens beyond (the light of) all the stars . . . and from that time all magic and all sorcery ceased."[3] It is quite incredible that a recent article[4] should not only commit itself to the startling hypothesis that Matthew and Luke wrote a "pious meditation upon the birth of the Lord", but should at the same time quite

[1] W. K. Lowther Clarke, *Divine Humanity*, p. 42.
[2] Justin, *Dial.*, 78. 9.
[3] Ignatius of Antioch, *ad Ephes.*, 19. 3.
[4] M. D. Goulder and M. L. Sanderson, "St Luke's Genesis", *J.T.S.* (New Series), 8. 1.

miss the point of the Ignatian comment by failing to end the quotation from the Ephesian letter. It is anything but clear that "all the others stars with the sun and moon make a chorus for the Star of Bethlehem because this is what the sun and the moon and the eleven stars did in Gen. xxxviij".[1] If the translation of μάγος as "professional magician" stands—and in face of the use of the word elsewhere in the New Testament it is hard to see why it should not—then there is far more to Matthew 2 than pious meditation. Not only is the evidence for the incidence of astrology in contemporary Judaism too compelling to be dismissed as irrelevant in the exegesis of Matthew 2, but we do the evangelists small service by thinking that they used the precious papyrus rolls for no more than pietism. They were first and foremost theologians, with a message of unique urgency to proclaim. So far as the first gospel is concerned, our duty here is to discover the underlying purpose of the Magi-story. Meditation on the birth of the Lord it emphatically is not, for the birth is dismissed in a genitive absolute, with not more than a hint that there was anything odd about it. If, prima facie, the story appears to be designed to give an answer to the query, "How came it that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, went to live in Nazareth?" then we have to confess that the author has been verbose, not to say obscure. Far more to the point is the suggestion that the story was an answer to a quite different question: "What happened in the natural world as a result of the birth?"[2] And this has the merit of being a theological question.

Once assume with Lowther Clarke that the Magi-narrative is the evangelist's way of telling us that the Christ-event was the end and the rout of current fatalism and astrological speculation; that in the birth of the Messiah was the death and destruction of that magical twilight-world which sought by dubious arts to penetrate the divine purpose—then the whole chapter is at once far more intelligible and far more pungent. The whole cosmic panoply is Messiah's, the seen and the unseen, and as he is the end of the old covenant, so he is the end of fatalism. No longer can the world hold fear and torment for *he* has been born in it, and as the Bishop of Southwell once remarked in a sermon, man is "free and at large in the world God made, since as Man God lived, died, and rose, in that very world". In symbolic form in Matthew 2 the sorcerers are driven to acknowledge that they have met their match, that the reign of their superstition is over, and that in token of their submission to the Conqueror they bring to his feet the ill-gotten gains of their trade, together with the incense and myrrh of their frantic divinations. "The two almost invariable accompaniments of the incantations are incense and myrrh", remarks Lowther Clarke.[3] And the Greek of Matthew 2. 11 will more than bear the meaning that they "delivered up" their treasures—προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα. Here, then, is the

[1] Goulder and Sanderson, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[2] G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins of the Gospel according to St Matthew*, p. 54.
[3] W. K. Lowther Clarke, op. cit., p. 47.

real reason why the evangelist sedulously avoids all reference to Psalm 72 or Isaiah 60. The Magi were no Gentile kings bent on coming to the centre of the earth to offer homage to a God-King about to suffer, but magicians casting away both tools and gain; and in neither psalm nor prophet is the magical ingredient of myrrh to be found. "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles" reads the Common Prayer as sub-title to Epiphany—but there is not the slightest hint in Matthew that the Magi were Gentiles, or that the author intended them to be so understood; and if we are to take account of the other evangelists, *the* Manifestation was on the banks of Jordan. Lowther Clarke's view is that the Magi were Babylonian Jews, fallen, as were so many more, into astrology and the magic arts —Babylonian Jews, for there is not a shred of evidence that any Gentiles were expecting a Messiah. If Gentiles did hear of the Jewish hope, they either ignored it or feared it. (To cite here the fourth Eclogue of Virgil is irrelevant—there are better explanations than a Messianic one for that exquisite poem, and for which Stauffer's *Christ and the Caesars* may be consulted.)

Was there an historical event such as that depicted in Matthew 2? To the present writer, a negative answer seems demanded. For one thing, there appears to be a far older tradition behind the story than is evident from the text, and Matthew's Old Testament quotations are independent alike here of MT and LXX. Astronomical portents were a commonplace of classical literature and legend, while the Jewish Midrashic Haggada teem with parallel stories of Magi, flights to other lands as a result of dreams, and of star-revealed births of future lords and conquerors.[1] There is, in fact, a quite arresting parallel with a legend of Abraham's birth. But when all this has been given weight, the silence of Josephus on the massacre of the Innocents must be given very great weight indeed. That suave and polished old gossip, who knew all the Herodian scandal, was hardly likely to have kept silence on anything so notorious as we must imagine such a massacre to have been. And what were the results likely to have been of a massacre in—of all places—Bethlehem? Hated though the Idumaean was, no such rising is known to us as must have surely followed a massacre in David's city; and at the same time we do well to bear in mind that the blood-guilt of Herod was of a rather different kind from that assumed in Matthew 2.[2] And why, in the name of all the probabilities, does Herod have to call a meeting of the Sanhedrin to answer a query which any scribe could have answered? "All Jerusalem was moved"—so it was, and the cosmos with it, is what Matthew 2 has to say. "What happened in the world of nature when the Child was born?" The Christ-event is of far too cataclysmic a character for life to go on "as before". Let God but intervene, and the fetters of astral determinism are shattered, the fears engendered by the fates thought to rule the world are dispelled. So the dupes and the priests of that fatalism must be brought to the

[1] Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (1930), has all the evidence in short form.
[2] Cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Herods of Judaea* (1938).

feet of Infant Lordship, there to cast away both tools and gain.[1] Men will be compelled by the very Event to take sides, and the best commentary on the Massacre of the Innocents, apart from the Fourth Gospel, is the archbishop's sermon in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral.*

If historical evidence is lacking for either Magi-visit or the slaughter of the Innocents, and if the common interpretation of Matthew 2 will not bear the typological weight we put upon it, it would be a bold man who would claim that we have no need of anti-fatalist, and anti-astrological, polemic. The fears of the first century are very much our own, and in our uncertainties we have an accurate (if more terrifying) mirror of theirs. In face of Lordship Incarnate, the modern magician and astrologer will do well to disgorge his gains and admit defeat.

What of the argument that those who lived nearer in time to the events described in Matthew 2 were far better able to judge of these things than we are? The argument is perilously simple. In fact, the gospels agree in main outline with the salient features of the Lord's earthly manifestation, beginning at the Baptism, through Temptation to Ministry, on to the Petrine confession and predictions of the Passion, with the final issue in Passion, Death, and Resurrection-Exaltation. With regard to the Birth, Matthew and Luke are at one in seeing there something beyond the course of nature, and, while Mark is silent on this, there may be a hint of the Birth-mystery in John.[2] In their understanding of the Exaltation of the Risen Lord the evangelists differ markedly,[3] while, as we have seen, Matthew and Luke feel quite free to use the Birth-tradition in very different ways. But in the field of our own history there is no better corrective, no better discipline, than our own daily press. Should there be anyone unfamiliar with "differences of interpretation", then let him take the trouble to check up the accounts in various sections of the press on the same events, on the same day (at which one is so often told that "our own representative" was there on the spot), and then let him attempt to find some agreement of mere fact in all the bewildering array of interpretation presented to him. Should he wish to cut the process short, recourse can always be had to the excellent series of Press Intelligence in *The Spectator.* From a comparison of the *Daily Telegraph* with the *Daily Worker,* the archaeologist of 2058 will probably conclude that the two papers dealt with two different planets.

We are, then, left with a narrative in Matthew 2 on the historicity of which the eminent and orthodox Dr Levertoff refused to pronounce, but on which liturgical language and practice has fastened

[1] There is a very impressive body of evidence in the early centuries as to the meaning of "magos" as magician, and the tradition lasted for a long time: cf. Basil the Great, *de Hum. Gen. Xti.*, 1. 591; Theodoret, *Eccles Hist.*, 5. 38; Theophylact, *in Matt.* 2. In the eighteenth century the *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus* of Suiceri is quite emphatic about the sinister meaning of "magos".

[2] Cf. Danell, *Studia Theologica,* Lund, 4, 1, 1951, for a view that Paul knew the tradition of the Virgin Birth.

[3] See the writer's article, "The New Testament and the Lord's Ascension", *C.Q.R.*, October 1957.

with a grip of iron. And this to the almost total exclusion of the understanding of Epiphany in the early years of the Church's life. To be convinced, as the writer is, that the whole mistake began with experiments in the Celtic mists and twilights of typology is one thing; but to find some means of redressing the balance is quite another. Reference has already been made to the restoration of the centrality of the Lord's Baptism, in the liturgical scheme, by the late Pope. But while there is ample evidence that the present phase of liturgical reform in the Roman Communion has by no means reached its term, it is to be hoped that Anglican understanding of the Manifestation is not to be strait-jacketed into an exegesis of Matthew 2 which the facts will not justify. We may indeed, by concentrating on the Baptism, deprive ourselves of one of the most popular quarries for missionary sermons—or so it will be said. But is this so? If we have at all rightly judged that the main and the burning interest of the evangelist at Matthew 2 is concentrated on the Lordship and Dominion of Incarnate Messiah, so that he presents us with a parable of very great urgency (as are all the parables), then we shall be singularly blind if we fail to lay hold of that which it teaches. Deity is but a child in arms, yet the whole dim world of demons and magic is prostrate, powerless, able only to cry out "Thou art Messiah" and acknowledge defeat. Lordship is Incarnate, and kings range themselves on one side or the other, either in rejection or submission—there is no middle term, no temporizing, no playing for position. Either way, the coming of the Wrath of the Lamb will involve men in taking sides, and some will be caught up in the bloodshed engendered by their own sins. The innocents will suffer along with the guilty—such is our world—but the Christ-event is not such that men can say: "God is all nice, and in him is no nastiness at all." Manifestation but underlines the fact that the end of the ages has begun to erupt, that it is the last hour, and the Fulfiller of the New Age will not brook opposition, whether from man or demon.[1]

C. S. Mann, O.S.B.

The Attractiveness of Science

It is too easy for the Christian apologist to caricature science and scientists and thereby imagine that he has dealt with the challenge which science presents to theology. In this article I want to look at science through the eyes of a non-Christian scientist in order to show how many of the Christian arguments directed against such people

[1] It will be noticed that nothing is here said of the Flight to Egypt, mainly because it is hardly germane to the discussion. Perhaps there are better historical grounds for claiming that that part of the narrative is genuine "history". Those who, like the writer, recall with thankfulness the sermons of the late Dom Bernard Clements, will remember how often he used the Flight to Egypt as a missionary theme. Students of the Old Testament will recall the frequency with which a new act of salvation is bound up with exile from the promised land, and with re-entry thereto, accompanied by a new covenant.

completely miss the point. As the scientist sees it, his work is not cold, abstract, impersonal, mechanical—adjectives often flung at it by those who shelter in what they call "the warmth and richness of the humanities". The scientist's work is at times intensely exciting; he may be passionately concerned in it; it may inspire in him the highest kinds of devotion and self-sacrifice; and he may find it emotionally satisfying; whereas, by contrast, concern with the great problems of existence may seem to lead only to frustration. Max Born, the physicist, once described how for years he had wrestled with philosophical questions, but at length abandoned them and experienced enormous relief "in turning to problems that could actually be solved".

It is true that science is "matter-of-fact"; it may seem to take the romance out of life. A physiological account of falling in love has no great inspirational value. But this does not mean that the finer sides of life are simply neglected. The scientist would reply to his critics that he is learning to value such experiences more deeply by freeing them from the clutter of associations and misunderstandings that normally surround them. He is well aware of the danger of oversimplification. But he would insist that the proper way to understand a phenomenon like falling in love is to analyse it into its separate constituents—physiological, sociological, psychological, economic, etc. The analysis may be enormously complex, but to abandon the analytic method is to abandon science, and that he is not prepared to do. His claim is that values, traditions, loyalties, personal relationships—in fact, all the imponderables generally associated with religion—are not obscure entities which can be dealt with only by non-analytic means; they are to be regarded as important factors in the whole psychological set-up within which man must be understood. To imagine that non-Christian scientists simply ignore these aspects of life, or necessarily undervalue them, leads to quite irrelevant criticisms of science as conceived in terms of nineteenth-century materialism.

The modern scientist may well take religious experience seriously. He will not accuse the religious believer of manufacturing evidence. He will say rather, "this is material to be studied by a psychologist; in fact, one of the great truths psychology has shown us is that states of consciousness or strong convictions may have explanations quite different from the surface ones". A biologist said to me recently: "Of course you must talk about God. But I will undertake to find biological reasons why you need to do so."

Sometimes one hears science criticized as being concerned solely with "brute facts" and abstractions from those facts. However, this concern with facts does not mean that the scientist must necessarily be devoid of ideals. The spread of science may be for him the supreme ideal, because he knows by experience the immense power of the scientific method when applied to all sorts of problems. The irritation of many scientists with our political leaders springs from a conviction of the ineptitude of a non-scientific approach to world organization. This may seem on the surface very naive, but I believe

that the continued optimism of many scientists, in spite of recent world events, is not as blind as it appears to be. For the scientist who can take the long-term view, national and political upheavals can be seen as large-scale experiments in the mechanisms of social change. This does not in any way lessen the tragedy and horror contained in them; but emotional reactions to horror are, in the long run, far less valuable than an understanding of the forces which drive men to perpetrate it.

The most important truth for the non-scientist to realize about science is that the scientist sees himself as committed, not so much to a particular body of theory, as to a particular method. Theory will change and can change because the scientific method is self-correcting. Philosophical questions can be left to sort themselves out and do not greatly disturb the average scientist. The method is the central characteristic of science, and theology stands condemned because it does not seem to employ it.

What is this method? It may be useful to pick out a few features of it, particularly those which contrast most clearly with the method of theology.

(1) Science is content to advance slowly, never allowing theory to run on too far ahead of fact. The speculativeness of much theology, often with only the feeblest anchorage in fact, compares very unfavourably with the gradual growth of scientific knowledge to the point at which we are daily prepared to stake our lives on it.

(2) The scientist always looks for the simplest explanation of a phenomenon and tries to present it in terms which can be strictly defined. Thus, to return to what I was saying earlier about falling in love, "love" is a word which can give rise to incalculable muddles, and the more one discusses it in terms of "higher factors" the greater the muddle would seem to become. The scientist will always look for a "reduced explanation" because he believes that that way lies clarity and agreement.

(3) One observer is as good as another. Hence the scientist has no need to concern himself with questions about authority, for the authority behind his statements rests solely on the fact that his results are repeatable.

(4) Scientific theories remain plastic. They are never proved in an absolute sense, but merely continue to evade disproof after continued testing. Thus they can always be expanded or modified to accommodate new facts, and the scientist's hope is that they will eventually accommodate all facts. Past experience has taught him that irregularities or apparently unique events can generally be found a place within the pattern, provided he is patient and not too ready to jump to premature conclusions about their uniqueness. There is a good example of this attitude in the British Medical Association's section of the report on the Church's Ministry of Healing. It is not denied that spontaneous remissions occur in certain diseases and that there are sometimes apparently inexplicable cures. But it is quite a different matter to pass from this admission to talk about miracles.

It is hardly surprising that scientists who are used to approaching problems with this sort of attitude find some difficulty when they encounter theology. Part of the trouble lies in their tendency to think of Christianity as a cosmological hypothesis with theology as a pseudo-science employing non-scientific methods. There are plenty of misunderstandings to be cleared up, but in so far as theology does claim to be about facts rather than about attitudes to life, it must take these scientific hesitations seriously. However, my purpose in this article is not to compare the scientific and the theological methods, nor to defend theology, but to give a sympathetic account of the scientific attitude. I have tried to show that science can seem to promise a "wholeness of life" based on what seem to be far more solid foundations than religion. And it cannot be denied that many scientists do in fact lead very rich, full and useful lives; they have wide interests; they feel that they belong to a community of scientists transcending national barriers; they recognize their mutual interdependence and the debt they owe to their predecessors; they believe themselves to be the servants of truth "whose service is perfect freedom".

There are moods, though, in which the vision collapses; there are other scientists for whom the vision of science as an ideal never appears at all. These are more conscious of the fragmentation of life that science can bring; they see the immense output of scientific results which no one will ever have time to digest; they are overwhelmed by the complexity of facts and the hopelessness of trying to take proper account of them all. Sometimes one goes into a great library excited and overawed by the extent of human knowledge; at other times crushed by the necessity of still having to make one's own ridiculous decisions in the face of so much that one can never know. At such moments the scientific method can seem like an intolerable burden; and for the scientist in such a state it may seem like a liberation to hear that not every truth by which he lives has been, or indeed can be, established by science; that before he ever begins his science he has already committed himself. True, he may only feel the need for such liberation when the mood is on him; he may dismiss it as irrational or treasonable; but the need is real and permanent none the less. For what the scientist too often does not realize is that on those who ignore her, philosophy has a way of taking her revenge.

J. S. Habgood.

Charles Wesley: the Poet and the Editors

It is by no means easy for the modern reader to make a just assessment of the poetical achievement of Charles Wesley, for his writings have been transformed by a long process of editorial alteration, which began in his own lifetime. It is the nineteenth century, however, that appears to have been the great age of editorial arrogance, and the compilers of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* the chief offenders. Unfortunately, the mischief did not stop there, for later compilers

apparently felt obliged to perpetuate "emendations" which had become endeared by usage. The editors of *The English Hymnal* professed to stand against this trend, saying, "The efforts, so often made in the past to improve the work of competent authors, have had the inevitable result. The freshness and strength of the originals have been replaced by stock phrases and commonplace sentiments; and injury has been done to the quality of our public worship as well as to the memory of great hymn-writers." The sentiments are unexceptionable, but examination of the book itself reveals little evidence of any sustained effort to repair the injury done to the memory of Charles Wesley. Nor, unfortunately, is there much change in *Songs of Praise* or in *Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised,* 1950.

As an example of what the *Ancient and Modern* editors could do when they really started to swing the butcher's axe, let us take the hymn which John Wesley thought the sweetest his brother ever wrote, and which, by coincidence, he and his Staffordshire congregation were singing at the hour when Charles died. It is one of his funeral hymns, consisting of five eight-line verses, with a vigorous and deeply moving opening:

Come let us join our friends above
That have obtain'd the prize,
And on the eagle wings of love
To joy celestial rise;
Let all the saints terrestrial sing
With those to glory gone,
For all the servants of our King
In earth and heaven are one.

Our incredible editors blot out the first half of this, and alter every line but the third in the second half:

Let saints on earth in concert sing
With those whose work is done;
For all the servants of our King
In Heav'n and earth are one.

But it is to a later verse that one must turn for a perfect illustration of the dictum that "the freshness and strength of the originals have been replaced by stock phrases and commonplace sentiments". (Ironically enough, the *English Hymnal* has followed *Ancient and Modern* in this.) Wesley's verse 3 (first half) reads:

Ten thousand to their endless home
This solemn moment fly,
And we are to the margin come,
And we expect to die.

In place of this, *Ancient and Modern* gives us:

E'en now to their eternal home
There pass some spirits blest;
While others to the margin come,
Waiting their call to rest.

Similarly, the triumph of Wesley's last verse has been replaced by four lines containing scarcely a word of his.[1] In short, the five eight-line verses have been reduced to five of four lines each, half of which he did not write. The original version may be found by the curious, almost unaltered, in *The Methodist Hymn Book* (1933).

Much then, of Charles Wesley's force as a Christian poet is lost if we know his poems only in the versions presented to us by the average hymn-book editor. This could largely be put right in new editions of the hymn books, but that of itself would not suffice to give us the material for a true estimate of his contribution to Christian verse. There remains the all-important matter of selection. Wesley wrote over 9,000 pieces in verse. Most have a Christian reference, but some are not intended as hymns, or in some other way are unsuitable for congregational singing. The hymn-book editor must inevitably ignore even the best of these, but it is none too easy for him to choose the best of the remainder when the quantity to be surveyed is so vast. Can we be sure that the thirty-three hymns selected for *Hymns Ancient and Modern* represent Wesley at his best?

In an attempt to answer this question, I made my choice of the best hymns by Charles Wesley in *The Methodist Hymn Book* (1933), and then turned to *Ancient and Modern* to see if they were included. From the 242 hymns included in *The Methodist Hymn Book*, I selected 89 which seem to me outstanding hymns, of which I consider 14 to be of high poetic merit. By this I mean that any of those 14 could be included in any anthology of English verse without looking like poor relations (but how seldom they *are* included!). Of the 89, only 21 were to be found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and even fewer in *The English Hymnal* and *Songs of Praise*. As many as 66 did not occur in any of the three books. Of the specially selected 14, only 5 were in *Ancient and Modern*, and the remaining 9 were not in any of the three books. Thus, if my judgment has any validity, Wesley's finest poetic achievement is even more sparsely represented than his large output of highly competent verse, in the hymn books most widely used in the Church which was so dear to his heart. The nine hymns[2] specially referred to above exemplify Wesley's skill in no fewer than six different metres. They also exemplify his skill in investing Old Testament themes with a wealth of Christian meaning ("Captain of Israel's host" is based on Exod. 13. 21); his use of the great festivals of the Christian Year (e.g. the Nativity hymn, "Let earth and heaven combine"); his profound personal and corporate religious experience, and his sense of the Church as the Body of Christ. And they exemplify all these things at a very high level.

Naturally enough, my personal selection does not correspond exactly with that made by Dr J. Alan Kay in a recent book.[3] Here

[1] See also in *M.H.B.* the triumphant endings of "Christ the Lord is risen to-day" and "Soldiers of Christ, arise"—respectively omitted and altered in *A. and M.*

[2] *M.H.B.*, Nos. 135, 142, 357, 486, 487, 608, 610, 902, 956.

[3] *Fifty Hymns by Charles Wesley*. Selected by J. Alan Kay. Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.

again, however, it is interesting to note that, of the 50 hymns chosen (all from *The Methodist Hymn Book*), only 15 are in *Ancient and Modern*. As they are here printed with the tunes, the book provides an excellent opportunity for members of other denominations both to appraise the classical Methodist tradition of hymn-singing and to survey some of Charles Wesley's best work, including the hymns already mentioned in this article. The extent to which these hymns provide a frame of reference for Methodist thinking and writing may be judged from a recent book by Dr Eric Baker, Secretary of the Methodist Conference.[1] In this short but masterly plea for the traditional emphasis on Christian perfection, he quotes much more from the verse of Charles Wesley than from the prose of John, and his final chapter is a detailed exposition of one hymn.

But what of those hymns and devotional verses by Charles Wesley that are not included in *any* of our hymnals? These are Dr Kay's concern in his latest publication.[2] Leaving aside the material in *The Methodist Hymn Book*, as being readily accessible, he has made a devotional book for the modern reader by careful selection from the remainder of Wesley's vast output. In such a work one need not quarrel with the fact that many pieces are represented by selected verses (in some cases only one), for Wesley's facility often betrayed him into writing more than his inspiration warranted. In addition to this, however, one finds from the particulars scrupulously provided in the index that something like half the poems printed have suffered verbal alteration, though often very slight. A few changes were necessary, to eliminate words that would be misleading or ludicrous to the modern reader, but this is altogether too much. Surely the modern reader is not so delicate that "Thoughtless of death and judgment near" must be toned down to "Thoughtless of all Thy love and care" (p. 170). An extreme example of Dr Kay's methods is the poem on pp. 85–6, where a verse has been transferred from first to last place, from past to present, and from third person plural to first person singular—not to mention considerable rewriting in the same poem.

Yet, much as one may disagree with Dr Kay's editorial policy, this must not obscure the fact that he has placed the Christian world in his debt by bringing to light what was hidden and by skilfully grouping his finds. In view of the bulk and magnificence of Charles Wesley's share in the present Methodist hymn book, we might have thought that little of value remained behind. Yet in this volume there is much that makes the average book of devotional verse appear to be suffering from pernicious anaemia. Here is holy awe before the Lord, here is intimate communion with the heavenly Father, and a faith supremely concerned with the centrality of *agape* in the Christian life. Here are poems on the unsearchable riches of Christ—and

[1] *The Faith of a Methodist*. By Eric Baker (Fernley-Hartley Lecture). Epworth Press, 8s. 6d.

[2] *Wesley's Prayers and Praises: a selection of little-known hymns by Charles Wesley, to which have been added a few by his brother, the whole being arranged for use mainly in private devotion*. Ed J. Alan Kay. Epworth Press. 15s.

the moving plea of one groping in spiritual darkness (p. 15). The wealth of Christian paradox is here (e.g. "the quickening power of dying love"), and a powerful consciousness of the dimension of eternity. The visible Church is for Wesley "the Church below". There are prayers for use by ordinands, by preachers, by wives, by parents, and (a superb example of Wesley's art) by a chorister. There are hymns for the Christian year, and—most astonishing of all—there are communion hymns and funeral hymns scarcely inferior to the many by Wesley already in our hymn books. With his deep love of the poets, his remarkable skill with a wide range of metres, and his unrivalled knowledge of the Scriptures, Wesley has left a heritage that all English-speaking Christians should cherish.

C. B. Freeman.

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CORRESPONDENCE

UNCHRISTIAN LITURGY

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

Fr Williams's psychological exposition of parts of the Prayer Book liturgy is interesting and makes some valuable points. But it seems to be vitiated by three defects.

(1) The application of psychology and the experience of human relationships to the divine-human relationship is over-simplified. I would qualify his analogies by such points as these: to offend against God is to sin, directly and immediately; to offend against our human father is to sin because the act is seen *in relation to God*. Again, the rights of a human father over his child are strictly limited; the rights of our heavenly Father over us are absolute.

(2) Fr Williams implies that our attitude to God is either one of loving trust or servile fear. But our attitude to God is complex, ranging from holy fear to filial love. Certainly, there is no place for anxiety or ungodly fear or ungodly self-contempt. But Fr Williams seems to contract the dimensions of Christian experience. It is true that love is the definitive category of that experience; just as it is of the Christian revelation of God's very nature. But there are other things to be said about God's nature and about our attitude to God.

(3) Fr Williams's approach implies an inadequate idea of sin. This lays me open to the charge of being a "spiritual masochist", revelling

in anxiety-laden self-abasement. So let me hasten to add that the enormity of sin can only be appreciated if the immensity of God's love and holiness is appreciated first.

"It is not denied in the slightest that in a great variety of ways we often fail to give God the love we know he deserves." If I had seen that statement out of context I should have thought it satirical, I think. Anyway, it is certainly a masterpiece of under-statement. The language of the General Confessions seems more in character with the Gospels, the Epistles, and indeed the whole testimony of the Bible and the saints.

I suppose we can take our clue about penitence from the incident of the "woman in the city, which was a sinner" (Luke 7. 37–50). She loved much, so she was forgiven much; she was forgiven much, so she loved much. Who can say which came first? In any case, what came first was the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus. It was that which broke her heart, so that love and penitence overflowed into tears. Any translation of her tears into words would be banal. But they suggest a depth and richness of response to which Fr Williams's categories do not do justice.

Yours truly,
(Rev.) G. F. Smith.

Church House,
Hollybush Lane,
Welwyn Garden City.

GETTING IT ACROSS

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

Some discussions I have had on the way church people usually talk about Christianity reveal that I ought to have stressed more strongly the difference between Articulation and Understanding in the article which you published last June. A person may comprehend the significance of a word, but be quite unable to put that significance into words. This is a difficulty which has to be taken into account, especially in an inquiry about vocabulary. For example, many who admit to being "saved", may well be able to do little more than Dr Graham who, when asked exactly what he meant by it, replied simply, "There's a spring in your step!"

Similarly, words encountered on a London street corner just before lunch, sound and look quite different from the same words used during a Prayer Book service. Words gather much of their significance from their surroundings.

The inquiry revealed not that these facts are true but that they are relevant to the problem of the "gap". Many church people never take them into account, or, if they do, very unwisely assume that because many of those who cannot explain their beliefs nor articulate them are nevertheless Christians, explanations and articulation are rather valueless. They are not necessary for virtue, but they are very important in getting anything across

It may be said that the story of the good Samaritan contradicts this; that Christianity is a way of life which can do without words and explains itself. Why then did we take so much trouble to translate the Samaritan story into English?

I should like to add two things. Churchmen ought not to applaud careful and increasingly wise theological explanations one day, and then overlook vague popular assent the next. For vague, inarticulate assent along humanitarian lines is just what most of our population have professed to practise for decades, and it plays the devil with Christianity.

Second, bitter experience has taught me that if your pupils do not know their stuff, it is nearly always your own fault. It is no good replying that if this is true, then Jesus must have been a poor teacher. The Lord has not yet stopped working, and any doctrine which confines his teaching to the limits of his earthly life neglects the fact that the Church is his body and must carry on the work entrusted to her. And she will not fail.

Yours sincerely,
BERNARD MAYES.

99 MORRITT DRIVE,
LEEDS 15.

"THE RECOVERY OF UNITY"

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

I should be grateful to be allowed to correct a minor misstatement of fact in Dr Tomkins's very kind review of my book *The Recovery of Unity* in your October issue.

I was not a member of the group which was responsible for the report published under the title *Catholicity* in 1947 and I had no part whatsoever in its production. My praise of that much neglected document is thus entirely disinterested.

Yours faithfully,
E. L. MASCALL.

THE BLESSING AT THE EUCHARIST

To the Editor of THEOLOGY.

DEAR SIR,

In reply to the letter of Rev. B. J. Wigan dealing with my article on "The Blessing at the Eucharist", I submit the following: Section No. 1 is out because I said "prayer of consecration", not "prayers", having reference to the Anglican only. No. 2 is beside the point because, as I pointed out, the word "thanksgiving" in our prayer has historical reference only and the Jewish ceremony is abrogated by the words of identification. No. 3: we do not accept Coptic, Armenian or even Roman rites as standard authority for Anglicans.

No. 4: there must have been a first communion by the disciples some time; it matters not just when. I do not ask change in the wording, only recognition of Jesus' words as of central significance.

The Canadian Committee on Prayer Book Revision, of which I was a member for ten years, just declare the whole prayer consecratory without any moment of climax and let it go at that.

R. C. Blagrave.

Hamilton, Ontario.

APPEAL

To the Editor of Theology.

Dear Sir,

If any of your readers are interested in the increase of understanding of the Church of England by other Communions abroad, their help would be very welcome to the Periodicals Bureau set up by the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations. Names and addresses of members of foreign Churches anxious to read Anglican periodicals and newspapers can be supplied to readers in this country who are willing to send on regularly their own periodical after reading it.

Many inquiries come from Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed sources.

Anyone who is willing to send a copy of Theology is invited to write (but not send the periodical) to: The General Secretary, The Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, Palace Court, 222 Lambeth Road, London, S.E.1.

Yours faithfully,

John R. Satterthwaite,
Assistant General Secretary.

BOOK REVIEWS

Whitehead's Metaphysics: An Introductory Exposition. By Ivor Leclerc. Allen and Unwin. 21s.

Platonism in Recent Religious Thought. By William D. Geoghegan. Columbia University Press and Oxford University Press. 32s.

There has recently been published an account of *English Philosophy since* 1900 in which, except for an incidental reference to his collaboration with Russell in the writing of *Principia Mathematica,* the name of Whitehead does not appear. Since presumably no one in his right mind would deny that Whitehead was one of the most powerful and, outside "philosophical" circles, influential thinkers of the century, the omission must presumably be due to the conviction that whatever Whitehead was doing after *Principia Mathematica* was of literally negligible interest to philosophers. Dr Leclerc's book, in which he argues that "Whitehead's problems are those fundamental

to the great philosophical tradition right back to the Greeks", is a most welcome and timely presentation of the opposite point of view. Since Whitehead's religious thought plays a part second to none in Mr Geoghegan's *Platonism in Recent Religious Thought*, it is convenient to consider the works in a single notice; indeed, though their expressed aims are entirely different, *Whitehead's Metaphysics* is a valuable complement to Mr Geoghegan's *Platonism*, since the elements of Whitehead's system, such as "feeling" and "primordial nature", essential to an adequate appreciation of his religious teaching, are necessarily touched on rather lightly in the latter work.

The objections which have most commonly been urged against Whitehead's philosophy are that it is needlessly complicated, internally inconsistent, written in an obscure style using ambiguous terms, and that anyway systematic philosophy is a disease of the mind which we have at long last outgrown. Whitehead's own life was passed in the repudiation of the last indictment. He wrote his early works on the philosophy of science in the belief that his previous logico-mathematical investigations would provide a means for the elucidation of the "general notions which we apply to nature, namely to what we are aware of in perception". His subsequent reflection on this problem led to the recognition that what philosophers have been telling us we are "aware of in perception" are abstractions of a high order. Though it is true that "the utmost abstractions are the true weapons with which to control our thought of concrete fact" they must not be *mistaken* for concrete fact: neither they nor the "furniture of the earth" presented by common sense are the "sheer actualities". Whitehead thus came to the conclusion that "the movement of historical and philosopical criticism of detached questions, which on the whole has dominated the last two centuries, has done its work, and requires to be supplemented by a more sustained effort of constructive thought". Whitehead's search for the "sheer actualities" was thus systematic rather than analytic; but it differed from the traditional "systems" in the warning that "the merest hint of dogmatic certainty as to finality of statement is an exhibition of folly". What has not always been recognized, and, if recognized, not I think sufficiently stressed by Dr Leclerc, is that Whitehead's method is characterized by the hypothetical-deductive approach of the theoretical natural sciences; and in the formulation of the hypotheses owes a very great deal to the postulational method which has enabled mathematics to transcend metrical relations and issue in what he himself described as "patterns of connectedness".

One of the greatest obstacles to the comprehension of Whitehead's thought is a direct consequence of this freedom from dogmatism. The close and complex "pattern of connectedness" which he weaves must be seen as a whole before the significance of its parts can be grasped. Dr Leclerc overcomes—in so far as it can be overcome—this obstacle by eschewing any attempt to follow the *order* of Whitehead's exposition, though rightly allowing himself to drive every point home in Whitehead's own words. Incidentally, would Dr Leclerc, in his critical volume which we shall eagerly look forward

to, consider the possibility of a greater reliance on typography to mark quotation than on the rather irritating repetition of phrases like "as Whitehead puts it"?

Whitehead called *Process and Reality* "an essay in cosmology": the reader approaching Whitehead's philosophy for the first time must be warned that Dr Leclerc has rightly restricted his *Introduction* to the metaphysical aspects of the whole "system". But what he set out to do he has done supremely well. Whitehead's philosophy can never be made "simple"; it can hardly be made even "lucid", or wholly free from "incoherence": it is indeed a sustained protest against the artificial simplification impressed upon the data of experience by the necessities of formal logic and of the abstract categories of the physical sciences. To enter into the subtleties and transcendent *honesty* of Whitehead's thought will always demand a sustained and dogged effort; but to those who seek with him the guarantee of "some eternal greatness in the passage of temporal fact" it is supremely rewarding.

Mr Geoghegan's concern with Whitehead, as with Inge, Paul Elmer More, A. E. Taylor, William Temple, and Santayana, is restricted to the consideration of his relation to "Platonism" in general, and to "Christian Platonism" in particular. To each author Mr Geoghegan devotes a concise and admirably documented exposition, followed by critical comments. The detailed assessment of the latter must be left to scholars within whose competence they lie. For myself, although the subject of the inquiry appears to involve a good deal of shadow boxing, the individual blows seem to be well aimed; and if in the earlier pages Mr Geoghegan appears (at least to himself) to knock the victims through the ropes, he later hands them back into the ring for a final cheer. I hope it will not be misunderstood if I say that for me the greatest recommendation of this in every way stimulating book was that it sent me back, with renewed interest and insight, to the "victims", and above all to the master who started all the trouble.

William P. D. Wightman.

King's College,
Aberdeen.

The State and the Church in a Free Society. By A. Victor Murray. Cambridge University Press. 22s. 6d.

The Answer to the Whole Set of Questions of the Celebrated Mr William Appolonius, Pastor of the Church of Middeburg. By John Norton. Translated by Douglas Horton. Harvard University Press (O.U.P.). 38s.

The Office of Lord High Commissioner. By Stewart Mechie. St Andrew Press. 10s. 6d.

Queen Elizabeth's Defence of her Proceedings in Church and State. 5s. 6d. The Elizabethan Bishops and the Civil Power. 3s. S.P.C.K. for the Church Historical Society.

Things old and new have appeared in recent months from the Congregationalist quarter ("the term Independent, wee approve not").

The mantle of Lord Hewart has descended upon Dr Murray, but how tawdry it appears, charred from the flames of the chariot, and in any case showing signs of wear—it is nearly thirty years old now, and has been worn by many would-be attackers of the wickednesses of bureaucracy. Dr Murray passes from subject to subject "as the swallow skims the surface of the lawn, and with just as little effort, to ascertain what lies beneath". He tells us of the horrors of bureaucracy, and the fertile slopes of Crichel Down are ploughed with gusto. Does the author suggest any remedies? No. Is he content to bleat about "Big Brother", with no hints for constructive reform? Unfortunately, yes. Mr Stewart and Prof. Finer have each found it necessary to write a whole book on the problem of pressure groups and their place in politics; not so Dr Murray, he dismisses them in half a page; they are, he tells us, wicked. Parliamentary parties and whips receive the same summary treatment. The view that "Big Brother knows best" is assailed, yet John Stuart Mill is attacked for teaching that each man knows what is best for himself. (The fact that Mill did not say this, and can be criticized for the passages on Socrates, the pig, push pin and poetry—when he speaks of those people of large experience judging which pleasures are most pleasurable and which happinesses ought to make us happy, is beside the point.) The mantle of Hewart, however, is incomplete—he at least understood law. The international law of Dr Murray is by no means well founded. He tells us that the Declaration of Human Rights is (*a*) part of the U.N. Charter, and (*b*) not attached to any effective political instrument. If (*a*) were right, (*b*) would be wrong; in fact, (*a*) is incorrect, and so (*b*) is correct (by mistake). Prof. H. A. Smith would certainly turn white to see himself quoted with approval in a paragraph which declared that international law is only another name for natural law; the author should glance at Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. His reference to the most-favoured nations treatment is somewhat mystifying, and it cannot but be questioned whether the author knows what this is. Calvin's theory of society was a deduction from his theology, we are glibly informed. Maybe, but how? If this is so, how does Dr Murray explain Calvinists with much the same theology having different ideas of society? He does not, because apparently he has not met them. The author writes of the dilemma of non-resistance in which the Puritans had placed themselves previous to the advent of Dr Price. Which Puritans? Certainly not the author of the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*; and the rumour has got around that there was a civil war in seventeenth-century Britain, with which the Puritans were not wholly unconnected; it is just for this teaching of resistance that Calvinism was attacked by many Royalist writers. We are told that at the Reformation ideas of natural law disappeared from Protestantism; what about Luther, the *Vindiciae*, Baxter and Grotius, to mention but a few? Dr Murray's book serves as a reminder that a knowledge of facts as well as a few interesting ideas is necessary when writing on social as on other questions.

The Dean of Harvard Divinity School has translated an interesting

seventeenth-century tract, which is the answer given by a New England Congregationalist to a set of questions on church order from the Presbyterians of Holland. John Norton, to whom the task was unanimously assigned, produced in charitable and clear terms the reply. What is the picture we get of the Puritans of the New World? Although basically Calvinist in theology, they seem rather more tolerant than many of the continental variety. The particular church is conceived of as the unit, and the basis of this is the church covenant; each congregation is seen as a perfect and self-governing unit, with its existence stemming from the decision of certain Christians to unite for a common purpose. The church is regarded, sociologically, as a club of like-minded people joined together by contract and having certain rights in society. There is no earthly reason why Anglicans of to-day should not accept this, but this is not all; the church is viewed *theologically* in the same light. There is very little conception in this tract of the church as a divinely founded society. Hooker and many early Anglicans fall into the opposite error of regarding the church as sociologically of divine foundation, and thus deserving in the field of political activity treatment different from other groups. It is to Stillingfleet and Warburton that we must go for a fusion of the two; where from without the church is regarded as one among many groups, while from within its divine foundation is maintained. Mr Norton's tract is useful as showing how far catholic Christians are from Protestants in their conception of the church, and Dr Horton deserves thanks from ecumenists as well as from historians for his excellent translation.

In his short book on the Lord High Commissioner, Mr Mechie traces the history of this office and describes the present status of the Queen's representative in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This book reinforces the popular belief that, as establishments go, the Scottish system is rather more satisfactory than the English, although development in Church-State relations has taken place south of the Border just as much as in Scotland; one need only glance at the two Church Historical Society reprints on the Elizabethan settlement to realize this.

David Nicholls.

King's College,
Cambridge.

Avicenna: His Life and Works. By Soheil M. Afnan. Allen and Unwin. 30s.

This systematic study of the philosophy of Avicenna in all its aspects marks a decisive advance in the understanding of the Muslim religious philosopher and of Islamic philosophy as a whole. It is well over fifty years that Carra de Vaux attempted a comprehensive presentation in his *Avicenne*. In the intervening years, especially over the last two decades, a number of important monographs on certain aspects of Avicenna's philosophy, based on critically edited texts,

have appeared, notably among them L. Gardet's *La Pensée Religieuse d'Avicenne* (1951). A number of scholars have investigated the Greek-Hellenistic legacy in Islamic philosophy, and the present book has benefited from these studies to which Dr Afnan's own researches into terminology have made an important contribution.

Islamic philosophy is essentially a religious philosophy and attempts a synthesis between fundamental Muslim tenets and Greek-Hellenistic thought. Dr Afnan does full justice to this characteristic, not only in a brilliant, succinct survey of Islamic philosophy as such, but also in his lucid presentation of Avicenna's colourful personality and original contribution to philosophy in East and West. The development of Avicenna's thought is sketched against the historical background of Persia and its intellectual climate and interplay of Persian and Islamic currents. The discussion of his philosophy proper begins with a particularly successful chapter on *Problems of Logic,* which already indicates the growing conflict between philosopher and theologian and the lines along which an accommodation was attempted. It would be asking too much of the author—who is thoroughly familiar with the problems of Islamic philosophy in relation to its source in Plato and Aristotle and whose mind is well attuned to its tendency towards synthesis—to show the same precision in the next chapter on *Problems of Metaphysics.* For, naturally, the demarcation line between metaphysics and theology is not always clear and consistent. But, thanks to Dr Afnan's close attention to philosophical terminology, he achieves a high degree of clarity and remarkable insight into the complex reasoning of Avicenna. He rightly stresses the originality of Avicenna in his handling of attitudes and expositions of the various philosophical schools (Neo-platonic, Stoic, Hermetic, Gnostic) in a critical, independent spirit. *Problems of Psychology* deal with Avicenna's indebtedness to both Aristotle and Plotinus in his concept of the immortality of the rational part of the soul. Avicenna's concept of God is very well set out in *Problems of Religion,* and its significance for scholasticism is brought out in the last chapter on *Avicenna and the West.* Avicenna's contribution to *Medicine and the Natural Sciences* and the Muslim philosophical and theological reactions in *Avicenna and the East* are good examples of Dr Afnan's mastery of his material and felicity of style. Of particular interest is the understanding exposition of Avicenna's views on God in whose Being essence and existence are identical, on divine Providence, on the crucial problem of Creation, on the nature of prophecy and the unique position of Muhammad and his Law. He is justified in claiming for Avicenna sincerity of faith and acceptance of the Muslim Scriptures. Otherwise Avicenna's wrestling with Plato and Aristotle on the basis of Islam would be unintelligible.

On the controversial question of Avicenna's mysticism, Dr Afnan pronounces against the assumption that his "intellectualized form of mysticism . . . became a fundamental part of his philosophical system". This may be so, but it was a fundamental part of his personality, to my mind. More important still, it was, in common with

many Muslim, Jewish and Christian medieval thinkers, Avicenna's bridging of the gulf that must of necessity exist between the rival claims to sovereign authority of "religion" and "philosophy". The gap can be narrowed, it cannot be closed. We must either admit the inadequacy of human reason fully to grasp the nature of God and the working of the universe, by placing certain fundamental religious concepts outside the reach and range of human reason and demanding their acceptance by faith. Or, we must escape into mysticism. I believe Avicenna took the latter path by distinguishing between the syllogistic knowledge of the philosopher and the spontaneous, intuitive perception of the mystic and the prophet. Dr Afnan holds that Avicenna was sympathetic to and interested in mysticism, but not committed. Intellectually, he held it to be profoundly true, but did not claim personal knowledge and experience. This is a debatable point. There are in a book that ranges so wide and probes so deep naturally details of evaluation—as distinct from description, which is throughout masterly—with which one may not easily agree, as e.g. Dr Afnan's assessment of the respective "influence" of Plato and Aristotle, or his scant attention to politics within Avicenna's philosophy as a whole, especially in connexion with the law and prophecy, or his treatment of the doctrine of resurrection. But these are really minor points on which agreement will probably never be reached. They pale into insignificance in face of a solid achievement of learning, insight and consummate skill of presentation.

E. I. J. Rosenthal.

Cambridge.

SHORTER NOTICES

Vocation and Ministry. By F. R. Barry. Nisbet. 12s. 6d.

Churchmen should be familiar with the Bishop of Southwell's rare ability to combine a bold independence of mind with a deep respect for all that is rightly meant by tradition, and nowhere is this approach more needed than in the subject of his latest book. Inspired by the practical problem of the shortage of clergy, it covers a wide range of associated questions: of theology, vocation, pastoral organization, recruitment, economics and training. The ancient parochial system and a "supplementary" ministry are both defended, traditional training and a perpetual diaconate are both attacked, yet there is no sense of inconsistency because what is old and what is new are equally subjected to the prior question—what is right?

Such a book should be widely read; its importance to all concerned with theological training is obvious, and the parish priest will find—amongst other things—something like a running commentary on the Ordinal. But I hope it is also read by those many laymen who really wish to serve their Church in whatever capacity God wills; how refreshing to read such sanctified common sense as "in all probability a man's vocation is what he can do best".

There are one or two rather serious ambiguities, due mainly to an

excessive and sometimes unfortunate use of quotation marks. To call the Church of England "'the laymen's Church'" could mean far too many different things; pietism is "'religion'"; and the type of churchman sometimes known as a "spike" is simply "'religious'". On the other hand, should we call the Ascension a "myth" *without* any quotes? I feel bound to offer this warning simply because I want to recommend the book to laymen and perhaps even interested schoolboys, rather than to criticize what I think the author means.

"What is the parson's job?" is asked several times, but never clearly answered. This is the weak point not so much of this book but of the whole pastoral situation, and it seems to me to be the crux of the total problem; there can hardly be vocations to a job when nobody seems very clear what the job really is. Yet an implicit recognition of this leads to one most constructive point that sets the tone of this exciting book and upon which we would all do well to ponder deeply: "It may be that by the discipline of fact Providence is leading the Church to-day to some radical reconsideration of the whole structure and function of the Ministry."

MARTIN THORNTON, O.G.S.

COPPENHALL ST MICHAEL,
CREWE.

HUMAN NATURE AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE. By W. P. Wylie. S.C.M. Press. 8s. 6d.

THE PATTERN OF LOVE. By W. P. Wylie. Longmans. 16s.

It has been said that there are in human life three fundamental problems to which the Christian must make answer anew in each succeeding generation—sex, power and wealth. Mr Wylie sets out to give us of the twentieth century a positive and constructive statement on the Christian use of sex in marriage.

The first of these two books fully lives up to and merits its title. It therefore goes without saying that there is in it much material of value to the priest, the schoolmaster, the married person and the lover alike: Mr Wylie's acknowledged indebtedness to Dr Gilbert Russell would ensure that.

This is an essay on Christian marriage, and *not* a handbook about sex. It is a very good statement of the principles of Christian marriage, and the rationale underlying them. Yet at the same time as he is expounding Christian theology, he does it in a manner that is practical, down to earth and full of understanding. Indeed, he seems to write, especially in Chapters 4 and 6, on the approach to marriage and on the incidence of post-marital affaires, with "the fast set" particularly in view. His excellent illustrations from life will make this book not only helpful but welcome to many who are trying to make a success of their marriage on inadequate foundations. Two quotations only can be given as a sample of Mr Wylie's wisdom: "Sex and romance and love are meant to be ingredients in the pudding of marriage. They are not snacks to be gobbled on the way." Secondly,

the answer given at a youth club to the question, "What is wrong with the conception of love as usually given in films?" "Too much hand-holding and too little housework."

The second book is a discussion of the tension between the power of romantic love and the claims of marriage. According to the writer the traditional orthodoxy of the Church, which he refers to throughout in C. S. Lewis's phrase "Mother Kirk", has been afraid of, and therefore failed to make room in religion for, romantic love. He sets the scene by stating the popular claims on freedom and happiness, and goes forward to explore a Christian account of sex, romance and married love in all its stages. "Marriage as an institution," he says, "has begun to fail; romantic love has grown too fast and too quickly. . . . Neither of them is seen for what it really is. The split in the pattern is hiding the glory."

He has attempted greatly, but I think too much. At times he is writing pastorally about the besetting problem of our generation; here he writes in a style that is easy, almost colloquial, and he does not evade the difficulties even when he has no answer to them. In the central section, however, he is writing about what might almost be called the Mysticism of Marriage; here the doctrine is deep and allusive. It is full of extensive citations from literature, primarily the poets of course, chiefly contemporary, and especially Charles Williams. This is certainly a most unusual book, learned and thoughtful, containing a splendid catena of excerpts on the romantic vision; yet I could not help wondering for whom it is intended, who are to be its readers—I should not go to it for a marriage address, I should not be happy to give it to every married couple on their wedding day. It is not everybody's book, yet every married person would glean something worth while from it.

Ronald Lunt.

King Edward's School,
Birmingham.

Edward King and our Times. By Lord Elton. Geoffrey Bles. 12s. 6d.

Priest and Pioneer: A Memoir of Osmund Victor, C.R. By Doris Thompson. Faith Press. 15s.

"It is the essence of the saint's *agapè*, love for God expressed in love towards his neighbour, that it is spontaneous, wholly unconditional, seeking nothing in return. Even the martyr missionary who set out to love the heathen in order that he might persuade them to become Christians, was not, in this highest sense, loving at all. For any form of love into which there enters calculation, or the hope of recompense of any kind, is not *agapè*." Lord Elton's book, from which this is a quotation, is not so much a biography of Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, as an exploration of sainthood in general and of the sainthood of Edward King in particular. And so the pattern of the book is dictated less by chronology than by the tradi-

tional categories of Christian perfection—the theological virtues of faith, hope and love; the cardinal virtues of fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice; and the virtues listed by St Paul as "the fruit of the Spirit". In all this, as my quotation shows, Lord Elton reveals a high competence which remains undiminished when he assumes the role of the "advocatus diaboli" and puts forward possible criticisms of the bishop's life in the light of questions that to-day must be asked and answered. What were the psychological springs of his love for others? And (inevitably) was he efficient? The portrait that emerges is a convincing one. Perhaps this book will help the Church of England at last to make an official beginning in enlarging her calendar by including in it some of her post-Reformation saints.

Miss Thompson's book about Fr Osmund Victor, C.R., is exactly what she calls it—a memoir. She gives us an outline of his life, together with many of his letters, sermons and addresses: a clear portrait of that vivid and sanctified personality, who, in an apostolic life, more than most "delighted in the Lord".

Victor de Waal.

Ely.

A Showing of God's Love. By Julian of Norwich. Edited by Sister Anna Maria Reynolds, C.P. Longmans. 9s. 6d.

Julian of Norwich. By Paul Molinari, S.J. Longmans. 16s.

Conversation with Christ. By Peter Thomas Rohrbach, O.C.D. Geoffrey Chapman. 12s. 6d.

It should not go unnoticed that women have written some of the most important original works of spirituality and written them well. Julian of Norwich, Sister Reynolds reminds us, was called by Evelyn Underhill with some justice "the first English woman of letters"; Teresa of Avila whose teachings provide the substance of the third of these books was a formative writer of Spanish. Neither woman was a conscious creator of literature; in fact, their power as both writers and spiritual guides lies in their essentially feminine, direct communication of their experience. Neither is a systematic exponent of the spiritual life, though they both cover a spiritual progression and by their very directness penetrate to the deepest points of union with God and the issues involved.

A Showing of God's Love is the shorter version of the *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*. There is every reason to accept this version as Julian's original account written soon after the revelations were given to her in 1373, perhaps before she entered her enclosure, while the longer version, as the text itself says, represents the fruit of twenty years' reflection and further contemplation by Julian as an anchoress. Sister Reynolds has produced a workmanlike edition of this shorter version from the British Museum's additional manuscript 37790, with modern spelling and punctuation and some rephrasing: Longmans have set it pleasantly for devotional reading.

This shorter version may help to introduce some who are alarmed at the longer version, but they may rightly suspect that there is more to be found in her writings than is here. Sister Reynolds provides some useful information in her introduction of a literary, ecclesiastical and spiritual nature, but she tends to over-write her appreciation. Mother Julian is her own best apologist and commentator: if you wish to appreciate her depth and insights you must read the longer version, which is available in two modern editions.

Few will find much enlightenment in Father Molinari's dissection of Julian's writing. In his elaborate classification of her direct utterances in strict post-Tridentine terms he fills pages with sub-headings, changes of type and footnotes; it begins as a defence and ends as an exposition, and reads rather like a Marxist apology for Chekhov. In a mass of terminology the plot is lost and the power to speak to the audience is stifled. The test in either case is to act out the plot. Julian's great phrases—about the Passion, about Christ's "self-noughting" and ours, that in God's providence "all shall be well", that "love was his meaning", and of the "oneing" of man with God through Christ—these are much more than propositions about the threefold way. These phrases and the visions out of which they arise are the dialogue and scenes of the spiritual life; the repeated phrases can teach a way of affective prayer and their images a way of contemplation to real men and women in the changed circumstances of to-day just because they come out of a realistic woman's prayer. Fr Molinari's book moves in a different world from either that of Julian or that of men and women in the world to-day.

If Fr Molinari gives us a Ph.D. thesis on Julian, Fr Rohrbach, in his laudable desire to make meditation understandable through an exposition of St Teresa, produces something like a Sunday school manual with footnotes. He would have done better to let Teresa speak for herself in a catena of passages instead of tricking her out with quotations from later divines. His own comments are sensible and clear, though they often verge on the obvious. He or someone else ought to take his good chapter headings and write a much-needed fuller book on meditation.

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Language and Christian Belief. By John Wilson. Macmillan. 9s. 6d.

Mystery and Meaning in the Christian Faith. By Hugh T. Kerr. Ryerson Press, Toronto. $1.00.

These short works afford interesting examples of two complementary approaches to the current problems of Christian apologetics. John Wilson, a Housemaster at The King's School, Canterbury, seeks to meet the challenge of linguistic philosophy in a way "intelligible to any layman"; Prof. Kerr of Princeton Theological

Seminary, in four lectures originally delivered to the Alumni Conference, Emmanuel College, Toronto, outlines a Christian response to what he calls "The Revolt against Traditional Structures of Meaning".

Mr Wilson is concerned that "all Christians should face the philosophical facts fairly and squarely, and that they should adopt something of the unbiased and rationalistic temperament of the best type of agnostic". He feels acutely the challenge of linguistic analysis: granted that philosophers no longer declare all religious and metaphysical statements to be "meaningless", it remains necessary for Christians to say what their statements do mean. Mr Wilson bases his answer on the claim that religious experience can afford a sufficient basis for existential assertions about the supernatural. On these lines he suggests that we can establish a method of verification for religious statements, and enable them to stand alongside other statements, including those of science, without being reduced to vacuity. Religious experience, he argues, is also needed to provide a test of any authority on whose teaching doctrines are to be based. (There is not enough discussion of the possibility that religious experience should be experience of someone or something as self-authenticating authority.)

In bald summary all this may sound naive: in fact, the discussion of these points and the succeeding sketch of their application to traditional problems such as that of freedom and evil will stimulate (and at times provoke to violent disagreement) all those with some philosophical or theological training. They seem tough meat for "any layman" unless, like Mr Wilson, he has Greats behind him!

The dissatisfaction which the book nevertheless leaves behind it seems to spring from its neglect of those factors, both in the field of philosophy and in the general contemporary situation, which are stressed by Prof. Kerr. The theme of his lectures is the relation between revelation or "meaning" and mystery, a relation which he finds suggested by Paul's conception of *mysterion*. He views the tendency in modern art, literature and philosophy (outside linguistic analysis) to stress mystery and symbol as a protest against "the romantic-idealist principle that life and thought can be systematized into nicely arranged categories and pigeon-holes", and "modern rational-scientific" man's pride in his ability to "examine and explain the mystery of reality". He sees it as characteristic of Protestantism that it stresses meaning and therefore becomes vulnerable to "various kinds of rationalistic tendencies", though he is fully aware that liturgical revival or popular piety may stress mystery to the virtual exclusion of meaning. "Putting Life into Theology" will involve a more adequate grasp of the symbolism of biblical language and thought and the significance of the sacraments, coupled with a serious attempt to relate the gospel to the problems and questions of the day not as an answer that is "crystal clear and plain as a pikestaff" but as the witness to what God is and does in Christ of men who are themselves involved in the human predicament.

So it is that if Mr Wilson reminds us that we may not elude the

philosopher's questions by ambiguity and evasion, Prof. Kerr warns us against reducing or degrading God into a problem to be solved, "which is surely the lowest indignity and the grossest blasphemy".

M. H. Cressey.

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Cambridge.

BOOK NOTES

Out of Nazareth. By Donald M. Baillie. St Andrew Press, 15s. This volume contains a further selection of the late Prof. Baillie's sermons and addresses. They are marked by a fine simplicity and happiness of illustration. *Religious Experience and other essays and addresses.* By William Temple. Edited by A. E. Baker. James Clarke and Co., 21s. A generation is growing up for which William Temple may be little more than a name. This volume, to which Canon Baker contributes a long introduction, will enable readers not only to get the gist of Temple's teaching as a theologian but also to appreciate the wide range of his interests. It might with advantage have been supplied with an index. *From the Stone Age to Christianity. Monotheism and the Historical Process.* By W. F. Albright. O.U.P. for Johns Hopkins Press, 40s. A revised edition of a well-known book which aims at showing how monotheism developed from prehistoric antiquity to the time of Christ. *The Teachings of Pope Pius XII.* Edited by Michael Chinigo. Methuen, 25s. The late Pope's pronouncements on a large variety of subjects are here assembled in a form that will be useful for purposes of reference. It is remarkable that he was willing to express his mind on so many topics. *Western Asceticism.* Selected Translations with Introductions and Notes by Owen Chadwick. S.C.M. Press, 35s. This is Volume XII in the "Library of Christian Classics". In his General Introduction, Prof. Chadwick traces, with masterly but not forced compression, the development of early Christian asceticism into the monasticism which became characteristic of the West. The texts translated, which serve to illustrate the teaching on which it was based, are "The Sayings of the Fathers", a selection from the "Conferences" of Cassian, and "The Rule of St Benedict". The translations are as skilful as they are readable, and the whole volume constitutes a fascinating introduction to a great range of Christian experience and thought. *The Riddle of the Scrolls.* By H. E. Del Medico. Burke, 25s. The literature about the Scrolls is already enormous. The present work, translated from the French, contains many of the texts and an account of the author's solution of the problem they present. This is that "the Dead Sea Scrolls do not form a homogeneous whole, a library, but a heap of various writings and fragments which rabbinic authority consigned to *genizoth* (i.e. depositories for unusable sacred books, etc.) because it was necessary for some reason or other to withdraw them from circulation, and yet not destroy them, the Jews' bibliolatry forbidding the destruction of any writing in which the name of God occurred". On this view, the manuscripts do not derive from a single community, but each one is to be considered as a separate document. It is a theory that will have to be weighed along with the many others that are being propounded. *What is Christianity?* By Adolf Harnack. Ernest Benn, 18s. To this reprinting of the English translation of Harnack's famous course of lectures the Dean of St Paul's contributes an admirable introduction, in which he looks at Harnack's position in perspective and considers how it should be viewed in the light of subsequent theological developments. *The Science of Prayer.* By Michael Bruce. S.P.C.K. 4s. 6d. This book, which was reviewed in Theology, August 1957, p. 344, now appears as a "Seraph Book".

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